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PASS TO OES/ENV SUSAN GARDNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AORC EAGR ETRD JA PREL SENV

SUBJECT: METHYL BROMIDE DEMARCHE: JAPAN SKEPTICAL

REF: STATE 176797

¶1. ESTOff and ESTFSN delivered reftel talking points on October 24 to Hideo Fukushima, Director of the Global Environment Division at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and head of the Japanese delegation to next week's Montreal Protocol Meeting of the Parties in India. Fukushima acknowledged that this issue is not an easy one and pointed out that Japan's methyl bromide critical use exemption (CUE) was itself cut 24 percent by MBTOC. However, he said the GOJ is ready to accept MBTOC's decision, unless the U.S. has some very special argument to question its validity. He asked us to clarify the reference to non-technically based cuts in the talking points. Does the USG question the qualifications of the committee members, he asked? Does it believe the committee's decision on the U.S. CUE was political? ESTOff responded by stressing the dissent within MBTOC over such a drastic cut.

¶2. Fukushima said Japan will make its best efforts to swallow MBTOC's recommendations. However, he also said that there is some room for working together on the issue. He said an informal bilateral discussion could be possible in New Delhi on Sunday. And he said he would be glad to accept any more specifics Post could pass along from Washington re: his questions above. (Comment: it appears the GOJ has decided, after considerable deliberation, that it will accept MBTOC's cuts. If the Japanese are to support restoring the U.S. CUE, the U.S. delegation will have to convince them in person.
End comment.)

SCHIEFFER